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EXPERIMENT STATION FILE

ARTICULATION OF THE EXTENSION AND OTHER ACTION PROGRAMS*

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The whole field of articulation of the various action programs of the Government is a very broad one. It involves not only the job of working together, but, first of all, development of a coordinated program for all to work toward. I think we face a danger of considering the problem too much from the standpoint of agency coordination and not enough from the standpoint of helping farmers and farm women to understand their problems, realize their opportunities, and plan to meet their needs.

As you know, the Extension Service was started in a period of general rising farm price levels, and pretty quickly was thrown into the task of helping the farmers of the Nation produce more and more food to feed our soldiers and allies during and for some time after the World War. Increased production and, later, the need for higher yields and more efficient production were the big jobs that faced us then. We met that problem by demonstrating to farmers far and wide the best known scientific practices of crop and livestock production.

During the last few years the country has been facing a vastly different situation: Surplus crops, low prices, foreign countries unable to buy our exports, tenantry and the need for rural rehabilitation. Much of this is a result of a lack of forethought and a failure of farmers as a whole to analyze their local, regional, and national problems and develop sound long-time plans to meet them. Farmers have always had to plan their farming operations from one year to the next, but in their planning they have seldom given enough thought to the big national problems that affect them locally. To help meet these national problems, such agencies as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Farm Security Administration, and the Soil Conservation Service have come into the picture -- each with a specific farm program, each to do a specific job outlined by Congress.

Basic Farmer Planning Needed

Without question a great need exists for the close articulation of these newer action programs with the established Extension Service program so that the farmers can make the most of all these programs in working out their problems. There is, however, the more fundamental need for encouraging and helping farmers to analyze and understand their county, State, and national problems and to make basic long-time plans in terms of all their needs.

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The farmer is closest to and knows the most about his own local problems. He welcomes encouragement and facts that will help him to study and understand and overcome his problems. In long-time coordinated planning, farmers are recognizing the need of defining thoroughly what their problems are, after considering all the facts they can get about them. What are some of the things that farmers have decided through such planning? They have mapped the areas in their community that need to be retired from farming; they have picked out other areas not now being farmed but which are suitable for certain types of farming; they have recommended the best types of crop rotations and other management practices best suited to the different localities; and they have recommended adjustments that are needed in each community to put farming on a sounder basis.

These are just a few of the many community needs that farm people have decided through organized program building. After they have decided these needs, it has been shown, they can better decide what they can do individually to meet them, what they can do through cooperation with other farmers in the community, in the county, and in the State. They consider, too, the help they can get from the Extension, research, and teaching staffs of the land-grant colleges and other State agencies. Following this, they are in a position to decide what they can do through cooperation with farmers on a regional or national basis. Such planning gives them an opportunity to determine what help they can get from the various national action programs.

It is easy to see that such long-time, coordinated plans for the different communities will not only help to give the farmers a clearer understanding of the problems in their community, but will give the different agencies set up to help farmers very definite guidance from the farmers. Such plans will be very valuable to the Extension Service in its program building, will help the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in making regional adjustments to make its program suit local conditions, will serve as guides to the Bureau of Public Roads in deciding where to build secondary farm roads, will suggest areas that the land purchasing agencies should consider buying, and serve in many other ways to help all agencies articulate their programs to meet farm needs in each community to the fullest extent.

Extension Can Aid Planning

The Extension Service with its long experience in the field and close relationship to farm people has proved repeatedly that it can give much help to farm people in solving their problems. We have in program building a real opportunity to help farm people analyze their problems and work out coordinated plans for meeting them in terms of all the problems of management of the farm and farm home.

Last year in 43 States there were more than 2,000 organized program planning committees, and nearly half of those committees were developing land-use maps of their counties in an attempt to set forth what they felt

were the conditions and long-time needs in each area in the county. That was a real step forward in widespread program building.

Help To Connect Plans and Administration

Another very important step toward greater articulation of agencies the Extension Service can take is to give the greatest help possible to the farmers administering locally the newer action programs. The newer action agencies have the added facilities of special grants, payments, and loans. Helping farmers to make the fullest use of these new facilities and advantages for solving their problems is a job that very definitely confronts us.

Here we have a real opportunity to help bridge the gap between the basic program building that farm people do and the local administration of these new programs. We need to develop to a higher degree the technique of helping farmers discuss problems in their own community, and of furnishing them with facts and explanations that will help them fully to understand and make the fullest use of the various action programs in meeting the long-time as well as immediate needs of their farms and communities.

We can render a real service to this end by stimulating and helping farmers in selection of local committees, helping them to hold committee meetings, and helping those farmers responsible for the local administration of different programs to coordinate those programs with the recommended programs worked out by the over-all farmer program building committees.

The experience that farmers get in explaining and administering these programs, and the understanding they must have of the programs and the problems of their community will put them in position to be very helpful in working out a coordinated program for the community.

Of course, we need to keep in mind that there are definite limits to the time and effort farmers can contribute to local program building and administration. We also need always to keep the field open for the developing of interest and the furnishing of factual material to farmers, instead of shoving prepared plans and programs at them. Our job should be to help them study and understand their problems and possibilities and work out their own plans instead of our working out the plans for them.

Federal-State Agreement

Efforts to bring better articulation of State and Federal farm programs culminated in a recent conference at Mount Weather, Va., just out of Washington, between representatives of the various action agencies in Washington and the land-grant colleges and extension services.

You have had reports on that conference and, no doubt, are already thoroughly familiar with the agreement reached. That conference cleared

several major points that I have been wanting to see cleared. The Department, with all its action agencies, as well as the representatives of the States, agreed that our basic need is fundamental coordinated planning from the standpoint of management of the entire farm and farm home. They agreed that the planning should be done largely by the farmers in each community. They agreed to begin by setting up county and State land-use planning committees, dominated by farmer thinking, and that the official responsible for any land-use program in the county or State is responsible for consulting with those committees before proceeding with the program.

The Department has asked the State extension director to take the lead in his State in organizing and to be chairman of the State committees, and the county agent to do the same for the county committee. Here is a real chance for articulation from the ground up, planned largely by the farmers themselves. It is a chance for the Extension Service to help farmers develop the kind of coordinated program they need and want on a community, county, State, and National basis. If I understand the ideal of economic democracy the Secretary of Agriculture has so often talked about, such planning by farmers surely must be the basis for it.

Extension's Next Move

The greatest hope for such planning, I believe, however, lies largely in the attitudes and initiative of State extension workers; in the organization of these planning committees, in the stimulation we give the farmers to analyze their problems, and in the facts and understandings we help them to obtain about their situation and opportunities.

Just as back in 1914 we had a big job of taking more scientific production practices to farmers, today we have a big job of stimulating and helping farm folks to plan and make the economic and social adjustments that are necessary for better living in the various communities. We have not only the job of organizing and stimulating farmer thinking through planning committees, but we have the big job of furnishing those committees with the facts they need about local, State, and National problems. We have the added opportunity of helping farmers who are administering locally such action programs as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration program to make the fullest use of those programs in meeting the long-time needs of the community as outlined by the over-all program planning committee.

The Opportunity Ahead

Here is Extension's opportunity to help through the farmers in the articulation of all farm programs into one coordinated program of better management for the whole farm and home. It's a big field, and it may be a task for the next 25 or 30 years. I do think that it is a fundamental and necessary job and that we are making real progress. The next move is now up to Extension workers, and, as I see it, the success of this whole

long-time endeavor will depend largely on the attitude and initiative with which we go about the job of organizing, stimulating, and assisting farmers to analyze their problems and plan their needs in terms of the whole problem for each community, each county, each State, and for the Nation as a whole.

Distribution.--A copy of this circular has been sent to each extension director, and to each agricultural-college and experiment-station library.



Articulation of the Extension and Other Action Programs

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